

The COMMONWEAL

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Christmas Hope

SINCE last Christmas much has happened to raise our hopes of victory and peace. Africa is now completely cleared of Axis forces. Mussolini has virtually disappeared and one-third of Italy is in Allied hands. Hitler's Balkan satellites give indications of getting ready to break away. Russia's armies have unmistakably and irrevocably turned the tide on the Eastern front. Even in the vast Pacific the first moves toward rolling back Japan have been successfully accomplished, although at the cost of great loss of life. In reckoning what progress has been registered toward achieving a lasting peace, perhaps the fact that the United States, Britain, China and the USSR have agreed together is the greatest milestone of them all.

Much remains to be accomplished. Remarkable feats of production and training, not to speak of individual courage and determination, have enabled the Allies to dominate the European skies, disrupt German production and morale and generally whittle down the German war machine. But we have still to find an acceptable formula whereby Germany can see the way clear to surrender. Our planes can deliver increasingly terrible destruction, but our armies still lie hundreds

of miles from the heart of Nazi resistance. We have not yet arrived apparently at a solution other than grinding on to Berlin, fighting every inch of the way. We have left the Germans no alternative to continuing a struggle they now know is hopeless, killing and being killed and putting Europe to the torch. Nor have we yet seen fit to lay a sound foundation for Europe's future and world peace by permitting supervised feeding of the children starving in occupied countries despite almost universal approval for such a project. This and the continued lack of positive, specific war aims are darker aspects of the picture. Americans are stronger on production and the marshalling of brute power for their first major test with the enemy than they are on the imagination and vision that will be needed in any eventuality for the concluding of the peace. We are on our way but we do not see how to bring the war to a successful conclusion.

To many religious leaders there seems to be only one explanation of the horrors of this war. We have been permitted to bring this war upon ourselves because God is displeased with the world. And there would seem to be two principal means of assuaging God's wrath. Man as a person and as a member of the community must reform his everyday life in a manner consonant with God's dominion, justice and mercy. Then, where the war itself is concerned, we must refrain from inhuman means of waging it and seek a peace based on justice before all else. Only then will man find again that peace and hope and joy which are the marks of the holy Christmas Season in times of peace.

During Advent Christians the world over have been imploring God to deliver the world, to stir up His might and come, to show us His ways, to show us His mercy, to come to save us, to forgive the sins of His people, to advance the work of our salvation. And on Christmas Day this year we pray with confidence that the new birth of God's only-begotten Son in the flesh may set us free who by the old bondage are held in thrall under the yoke of sin. For here is man's only hope.

Meeting National Aspirations

THE PLIGHT of the Basque people is a poignant reminder of the deep national sentiments of a number of European ethnical groups that are in danger of being completely absorbed by larger units in the postwar settlement. The Spanish Basques number nearly 2,000,000 out of Spain's 25,000,000. It was in accord with century-old religious and political traditions that they fought against General Franco in the Civil War, that they are opposed to him today. In fact from the sixth century on the Basques were conscious of the difference in outlook which separated them from the rest of the Spanish people. For centuries their

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Bishops have refused to take part in the great councils of Toledo where Spain decided so many matters of both Church and State, because these councils were too political in character for a people by whose laws no priest was permitted "to act as a Deputy at any time." It is also highly significant that officials of the Spanish Inquisition were stopped at the borders of the Basque Country and not permitted to pursue heretics further. As a result of their long tradition of keeping religion and politics separate, the Basques are the most ardent Catholics in Spain, with 98 percent of them in the countryside faithful to their religion; compare this with Cardinal Goma's estimate that in certain typical districts of Spain "there are parishes where scarcely five percent of the men and no more than twenty percent of the women go to Mass."

It is not surprising, then, that in attempting to integrate the Basques into his centralized authoritarian state, with its alien politico-religious tradition, General Franco has encountered the most stubborn opposition. This has been heightened by the fact that during the course of the Civil War his forces executed no less than 18 Basque priests, while literally hundreds of the Basque clergy have been exiled or imprisoned. But following the lead of Bishop Mateo Mugica of Vitoria the Basques are still vigorously opposed to the "attempt to drag the Christian Church and Christ Himself and His divine doctrines into support of a cause saturated through and through with human passions." All this about their case and a good deal more corroborating detail can be gleaned from the current *Bulletin of the Basque Delegation in the USA*, 30 Fifth Avenue, New York 11, N. Y.

The Basques have the greatest difficulty winning even a hearing for their case. If the Franco régime were stronger today, less dependent on the fate of the Axis and more representative of the popular will, there would be a real danger of this remarkable ethnical group being submerged in the Spanish State for years to come. Such danger is far more imminent in various parts of occupied Europe. After this, as after the last war, one of the most vexing problems will be that of the minorities. So far their fate seems to lie in the hands of the Big Three.

Is complete national independence the answer for the Basques and the score of ethnical minorities whose fate remains to be decided? Or is there a formula more consistent with the political and economic needs of postwar Europe? The solution would seem to lie more along the lines of guaranteeing local autonomy within larger political units—maintenance of local laws, educational and religious institutions, historical traditions, comparative autonomy in all internal affairs. All this is in opposition to the monolithic, authoritarian

dictatorship. Local autonomy would combine the advantages of participation as an equal in a larger political and economic whole (so necessary in the modern world) with affording full play to a people's most cherished traditions. That is one of the things we mean by democracy.

Coming Out into the Open

IT IS now many months since action was initiated to require Southern railroads to refrain from discriminatory employment practices. Very briefly the case is this: years ago Negroes were employed quite generally on the railroads. Gradually their field of employment has narrowed, especially with the restrictions imposed upon them by the Railroad Brotherhoods. Apart from porters and day laborers, only on a few Southern railroads are a few Negro firemen now employed, and as a result of an agreement between the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen and the Southeastern Carriers Conference, even this small number was threatened with serious reduction. The case was brought up before the President's Fair Employment Practices Committee, and hearings were to have been held last winter. Pressure caused the postponement of these hearings and eventually counter-pressure brought about the reorganization of this committee, with Monsignor (now Bishop) Haas as its new chairman. His elevation to the hierarchy forced him to resign from this position, and the present chairman, Malcolm Ross, handed down the eventual decision of the FEPC which consisted of an order directing the railroads to desist in their discrimination against Negroes. The unions involved in the case refused to appear at the FEPC hearing.

Now the carriers have come out with an outright defiance of the FEPC, and an indication that if necessary they intended to carry the matter to the Supreme Court. The railroads minced no words. They state that their war "accomplishment has been achieved by peaceful and harmonious relations with railway labor and by patriotic and wholehearted cooperation between these managements, labor and the shipping and traveling public. We wish it to be clearly understood that any disruption of these peaceful and harmonious relations and of this patriotic cooperation which may result from your committee's directives is not the responsibility of these railroads. . . . with great respect the undersigned railroads submit that your committee was and is wholly without constitutional and legal jurisdiction and power to make and issue the directives which it made and issued . . ." The line of argument taken is that the railroads are compelled to bargain collectively with their employees under what is substantially a closed shop contract. Their claim, then, is that they cannot be required by government to break a contract which government requires them to make.

From the point of view of the railroads, their case is legally very strong. More and more it is being recognized that one of the worst injustices at present widely prevalent is the allowing of unions with closed shop contracts to discriminate in their choice of members on grounds other than technical competence. It is certainly desirable that this whole issue be carried to the Supreme Court.

Permanent Force for Pan Americanism

A WEEK or two ago we commented in these columns on the evident decrease of public interest in Pan Americanism. Once we felt secure against an outflanking movement on the part of our enemies, we showed that fundamentally there is remarkably little popular concern with what goes on south of the Rio Grande. There is, however, one large group of Americans who should be deeply interested in Latin American affairs, and is, indeed, beginning to show an enlightened concern therefor. This group is American organized labor. As has been amply demonstrated, Latin America constitutes a huge potential labor market almost as cheap as was the Far East before the beginning of hostilities. What would be more natural than for American capital and industry to migrate south, where it can obtain an almost limitless supply of cheap help? From the factories established in such area, goods could be shipped back into the United States at prices with which our own labor and industry could not possibly compete. The result would be a great pressure for impassable tariff barriers and all the economic merry-go-round which this implies.

Obviously, therefore, it is no more than enlightened self-interest for labor to bestir itself now in an attempt to forestall any such economic movement. The happiest solution, of course, would be by the development of a reasonable solidarity between all American labor, for this would serve somewhat to raise wages and living standards in the Latin countries and at the same time to safeguard our own. As an adjunct to this, it is essential that labor be represented on all governmental boards whose function it is to plan and control the external movement of American business. In all this there is no excuse whatever for the AFL, the CIO and the independent unions not constituting a united front, for here is clearly a joint interest equally important and equally impinging all along the line. The idea of sending labor attachés to our embassies and legations is excellent, for in no other way will any sort of close liaison be possible and up-to-date information be readily available. The State Department has already begun to carry out this scheme. What we must now look to is a public announcement of joint action on the part of American unions as well as adequate labor representation on all the public bodies shaping America's foreign commerce.

"On All Fours"

MR. IRVIN S. COBB is not dead. You may have been worrying about his health—how would I know. Well, Mr. Cobb, the humorist, is not dead, or, at least, he was not dead shortly before December 10, 1943, because on December 10, 1943, the *New York Times* printed a letter from Mr. Cobb to his friend Mr. Cooper, Executive Director of the AP, "the text of the communication penned in Cobb's own handwriting . . ."—an authentic letter therefore. A facetious letter making jokes about doctors ("for a while they tried too hard to be cheerful, if you get what I mean,") and about the local undertaker ("his interest was most touching for a while") and ending with a bright play on words ("Merry symptoms and a tappy new year"). A reassuring letter for all who desire to be reassured concerning Mr. Cobb's health. Of these the *Times* must think there are many. Perhaps there are.

Mr. Cobb was born on June 23, 1876; in Paducah, Kentucky; consequently he is sixty-seven. Not a young man but not a very old man. (Note: If this seems to be getting personal the reason is that Mr. Cobb's letter—he playfully calls it his "little epistle to the Corinthians and the Paducahans"—to his friend Mr. Cooper was given public circulation at the author's express request.) From 1912 ("Back Home") to 1937 ("Azam") with the one exception of the year 1935, he has published one and sometimes two and sometimes three books a year. He has worked for newspapers and magazines, for the radio and for the movies. The source of this information is of course "Who's Who in America—1940-1941" and although this volume contains 2,867 pages of fine type set in three columns per page it cannot provide samples of the wit and charm which Mr. Cobb has poured out through the fecund years of his life. One who has not read Mr. Cobb has to take the wit and charm for granted as also the probability that there are people, perhaps many people, who do not have to take the wit and charm for granted because they have read Mr. Cobb faithfully through the years and the corollary probability that these people will be glad that the *Times* has published a letter from Mr. Cobb explaining that he is not dead.

Well, what's all this about? It's about a postscript Mr. Cobb saw fit to add to his letter, a postscript which the *New York Times* saw fit to print. It is about a few short sentences which are—as far as we know—the most revolting that have been printed in the English language during this war. Perhaps we will find a way to avoid quoting them: we're stalling for time. They make a terrible thing to quote. They dishonor completely the man who wrote them. They are dirty sentences, cruel, inhuman. But because an Amer-

ican has written them it becomes a duty for every American who reads them to disavow them in order to save America's honor. Mr. Cobb has put something on the record: he has put on the record that he is not dead—as of December 10—that he is as funny as ever, that he is in his right mind and that there is an American—(well known enough for the *New York Times* to think that it interests its readers to know that this particular American is not dead)—an American, then, who can write three sentences so brutal that if they were credited to the worst nazi maniac, if they were supposed to be what the cruelest nazi murderer wrote about the most piteous Jew, we should hesitate to believe that they could be authentic. Yet here we have Mr. Cooper of the AP, here we have the *Times* guaranteeing the fact that there is an American who believes in murder and torture, who believes also that there is an American General who would murder and torture disarmed prisoners. If General Patton has a hasty temper, Heaven help Irvin S. Cobb if the two ever meet. For the insult to the General is not of a nature easy to forgive.

There are one hundred and thirty million Americans; there are a few thousand Japanese interned at Tula Lake in California. There is an American humorist writing in the papers about 'the approach of the holiday season,' signing his name "gratefully, Irvin S. Cobb." And then he thinks about the Japanese and adds a P.S. This disgusting old man—fairly old, not very old: sixty-seven—thinks about the Japanese and what he would like General Patton to do to them. This disgusting old man talks about Christmas and his health and then parades a disgusting dream of torture and blood. He makes a joke about Christmas and then by calling upon an American General to murder and torture the defenseless he would turn our war into a bloody and disgusting joke—if we let him.

I hate to do it; I hoped that there would be some way to avoid doing it; I hate to be responsible for quoting what I suppose, after all, I must end by quoting. I wish I had not read the *New York Times* for December 10. I wish I had never heard of Irvin S. Cobb. I wish there were no wars anywhere and no concentration camps. I wish there were no Americans writing sentences which dishonor America. I wish there was a way of saying that Mr. Cobb has dishonored himself and in so doing has imperiled American honor without being forced to give proof of what I say. But there is no way out. Here is what Mr. Cobb wrote:

P.S. If General Patton has outlived his usefulness by his bedside manners overseas—but I hope not—I venture to suggest that they fetch him home and for just about two weeks turn over to him the management of that nest of slimy, scaly, shark-toothed, yellow-bellied concentrates out

at Tula Lake [Japanese relocation center in California].

Two weeks should be ample, maybe ten days. By then peace and quiet will have descended on that troubled center, traveling on all fours will have become the natural gait of the surviving inmates and the landscape will look as though somebody had been cleaning fish-gills, gore and guts all over the place.

C. G. PAULDING.

My First Reading of the Summa Theologica

RAISSA MARITAIN

"Una est vera philosophia." (Saint Augustine, "Contra Julianum pelagianum," 4, 14, 72.)

"Et il n'y a pourtant qu'une vérité." (Henri Bergson.)

THE FIRST and admirable advice which Father Clérissac gave me, advice which was truly inspired, was to read Saint Thomas. While Jacques was busy at his work for Hachette and with his first articles, I—a recluse because of illness and therefore dispensed from any obligation to see people or to go about—could devote the best part of my time to reading and meditating the "Summa Theologica."

For two years, that is to say ever since our baptism, the starting point of all our thinking, whether about philosophy or life—and for us the former has always been inseparable from the latter—the starting point had been the faith by which we now lived, whose praises we sang incessantly in our heart and whose power to give order to all things we ceaselessly admired. We left the philosophers for the time being to argue among themselves; we were at rest in a temporary neutrality in their respect; we set aside all their philosophies until further notice. It was a delight to live far from their quarrels and little by little to let our human reason grow strong again, grow firm once more and well in the sunlight of the eternal truths.

The future inspired in us no fear, since, through faith, we had the good fortune to know truths of a certainty so penetrating that it is inferior only to the intellectual intuition in the beatific vision, and to which the strength of no natural intuition can be compared; truths radiating such a pure and universal light that they seemed to us to draw to them all truth, the fragments of scattered truths in the most diverse minds, the fruit of all intuitive knowledge.

We felt that to implant reason in Faith, to graft reason upon the tree of Jesse, does not weaken reason but strengthens it, does not enslave it but frees it, does not denature it but restores it to the purity of its true nature—just as to light the way for a man stumbling forward uncertainly in the darkness does not divert him from his true path but shows him the road he chooses to travel.

Meanwhile this frame of mind remained more philosophical than theological. The theologian possesses the principles of his science in divinely revealed truths, and starting from these he proceeds to fathom mysteries by rational paths, themselves tributary to some philosophy. While the philosopher finds his very principles in the order of intelligence and reason. And in this purely natural order his reason talks sense or nonsense as he may please. In the period which here concerns us, nonsense it was that generally had the upper hand, because through the idealistic denial of the ontological ties between intelligence and being and existence, human thought was depriving itself of all possibility of knowledge. Bergson provided a partial remedy to the situation by assigning to intuition the prerogatives which had been torn from intelligence. Thus, provisionally, he had helped us, but with the advent of faith in our souls, and of those certainties peculiar to it, we found ourselves faced with a new problem: that of the certainties which reason can itself attain. Our frame of mind remained therefore philosophical and not theological; we were not seeking, then—we were too ignorant for that—to investigate rationally the mysteries of faith, nor to deduce, starting from revealed truths, other, congruous and less universal truths, yet we felt an urgent desire to seek out what truths of a philosophical and universal order were implied in the tranquil assurance of the propositions of faith. And it is these philosophical truths which first in the "Summa Theologica" shone forth to us. They were stated or implied; everywhere they were present. The other truths, more precious and belonging to a higher order, were to become apparent to us later. Aristotle was now rising in his grandeur, taking on his true face through the grace of an inspired theologian.

It was not without trembling with curiosity and foreboding that I opened for the first time the "Summa Theologica" or the "Treatise on God." Was not scholasticism, according to the reputation which had been given it, a tomb of subtleties ruined and in dust? And would not even the prince of the schoolmen himself throw a little of the dust on the first flames of our young faith?

From the very first pages I understood the vanity, the childishness of my fears. Everything, here, was freedom of spirit, purity of faith, integrity of the intellect enlightened by knowledge and genius.

The serene calm of the style, in appearance so impersonal, the peaceful bearing of the reasoning which gives to each word the meaning closest to the intellectual intuition from which it was born and, precisely for this reason, to each word gives also the fullness of its savor; the spiritual power, almost angelic, which allows Saint Thomas to enfold within the briefest of his propositions

innumerable truths each linked the one to the other according to the very hierarchy of real beings—everything was luminous for me in what I read, and it was with an incessant act of thanksgiving that I pursued my reading.

Writing these pages I find myself again in the happy emotion of that first contact with the thought of Saint Thomas.

So great a light kept flowing into both my heart and mind that I was carried away as if by a joy of Paradise. To pray, to understand, was for me one and the same thing; the one made me thirst for the other, and that thirst in me I felt to be constantly, and yet never, quenched. At that time, also, I read Saint Gertrude, a German Benedictine of the thirteenth century; often I repeated one of the prayers that she most loved to say: "Glory be Yours, oh most gentle and benign, oh most noble and most excellent, oh most joyful and most glorious, oh resplendent and ever tranquil Trinity . . ." and the work of Saint Thomas was wedded marvelously to those praises.

This first reading of the "Summa Theologica" was as if I had been given a very pure gift. From it I received once and for all the certainty of the essential truths concerning the intelligence and the joy of seeing that this last was strong enough to lead the principles of reason into the very heart of the starred night of faith. I received what I could receive according to my feeble capacity, but with fulness. The problems had disappeared—as they are wont to vanish in times of happiness—and they were to reappear later. But later on it was not I who would be called upon to face them, but Jacques, a philosopher by vocation.

That time was not to come immediately. We spoke together a great deal about what I was reading; but busy then preparing the "Lexique Orthographique" which Hachette had ordered, and—engaging his interest to a far greater extent—with writing his first articles, a year was to pass before Jacques undertook the direct study of Aristotle and Saint Thomas. In what manner he understood their principles, and how he carried out his own philosophical work, appears in all his writing, from his first book which was a critical analysis of Bergsonism. But "La Philosophie Bergsonienne" was published in 1913; and so I will speak of it a little later.

My great privilege will have been to receive, undeserving and without effort, to have received from so dear a hand, the spiritual fruits of his labors, fruits which I could not have attained without his help, and yet to which I aspired with a deep and living desire.

Thus I have been favored beyond all measure; I have lived in an atmosphere of intellectual severity and of spiritual rectitude, thanks to Saint Thomas, thanks to Jacques, and I cannot write of these things without tears of humility and love.

No Abiding Place

Italy, Europe, the "idealism" of the
Anti-Fascists . . . and the Church

George N. Shuster

AFTER Sunday Mass, the girls crowd in front of the Madonna's altar, lighting candles. We can guess a little of what is in their hearts. And we may wonder whether even God can add up the meaning of all the tapers in all the world, particularly those which do not burn because they are not to be had or because they have been forbidden. There are so many somber things no man can any longer understand. An example comes especially to mind. As the tide of war moves over the scarred valleys of Italy, there is slowly being revealed also a conflict of the spirit which may in the end prove even more fearful than the battle of armies. Cost what it may, we must reckon with that conflict. Rome may be destroyed. The rubble may hide even the steps of Ara Coeli. But beyond that, far beyond that, is the chance that Italy itself may for a time be lost to the Church. Either tragedy would be for all of us who have sometime knelt, in the flesh or in the spirit, at the tomb of the Apostles, a staggering blow. One finds it so hard to imagine that the Church like her Bridegroom may have no abiding place. Of course there was a time when the Apostle Pope found his throne upon a rood. There were years also when the Pontiff was in exile or in chains. What we must reckon with now is, however, very different. The enemy can be seen easily enough when he is ruthless, godless, as he has been in Russian towns. At long last he can be sniffed out even when, as in Hitler's Reich, he muttered words which deceived the elect. But who is the foe who now speaks in the schools where once the disciples of Francis and Ignatius taught, and who comes from out the jails of Fascism arrayed in a certain righteous glory?

These things are before me and you in part because the hatred in some recent books by Italian intellectuals is so violent and startling. Perhaps I myself should not have taken them seriously if I had not been reading Professor Borgese's plea for a better human future dedicated to what he terms the "Common Cause." Some of his book merely surprises one, as might chance bits of whispered gossip about oneself. But with other of Borgese's statements Dante would have agreed; and occasionally one thinks also of Dante's stern brother in the love of Florence, the monk burned at the stake because of the truth he preached. Yet

it was primarily of the great Friedrich von Hügel that Borgese reminded me. For the Baron had shared the dreams of passionate Italian reformers. Borgese's forerunners were long numbered among his friends. But unlike them he was not a Christian swept by a curious gust of anti-clericalism into a negation of Christianity. In his meditation the impetuous Pauline eschatology and the seeming political docility of the age of martyrs (matters of moment to Borgese) fitted into the schema of eternal reality; and that schema is always the working out in the souls of faithful men of the drama of Cross and Resurrection played for them in exemplary pain and triumph so long ago.

I have no doubt that the Baron would have scrupulously refrained from castigating the motives of a man like Borgese, for those motives are in many ways excellent. But he would now ask, were he with us, what is at stake, and how it is proposed that the battle for the soul of Italy shall be fought out. Well obviously thinkers like Borgese are not planning to confiscate Vatican City or to suppress the Catholic faith. But they are going to contend that ridding Italy of Fascism must be entrusted to an "idealism" stronger than, more realistic than, that faith. They believe in what they call a constructive, liberal democracy. But there is unfortunately every reason to suppose that if the masses follow them, Italy will see an anti-religious movement mightier and more ruthless than an ugly tide. The masses *may* follow them. And if they do, let us be certain that no power of occupying armies and no diplomatic activity will avail us anything.

This ominous possibility would be easier to comprehend if there had latterly been any fateful, scandalous weakness in the Church. As a matter of fact, our generation has known one of the most illustrious among all Popes—the firm, magnanimous, forward-looking Bishop who was Pius XI. There have been saints and heroic leaders in modern Italy. No refugee therefrom is worthier than Don Sturzo, whose biography men will some day read with pride. It is true that the Vatican made a pact with Mussolini, but it never left any informed person in doubt as to what it thought of Mussolini. No, we shall have to look more deeply than that for an explanation and a remedy. Doing so, let us remember that Italy is only an example.

It is the widening gulf between mankind and Christendom which we must survey. Some part of that gulf is as abiding as history itself, and as deep as the passion and the pride of humanity. But some part of it also is not.

During the past century and a half, the world has been shaken by a series of almost unparalleled social explosions. Though these were sometimes military and sometimes economic or political, the result was always that under the press of fighting men were driven by the intensity of the struggle to find new ways for increasing the natural energy latent in natural resources for use by their side. Between upheavals, the masses sought industriously to enjoy the new inventions. In so doing they engendered fresh rivalries out of which fresh explosions developed. Therewith poverty came to mean, first of all, defeat—proof of the fact that one had lost out in the struggle for existence. But it likewise became relative. That is, although men and nations might actually be better off than they had ever previously been, they still could appear to be, by comparison with others more affluent, dispossessed and in penury. How curious it seems in retrospect, for instance, that the Germany of the pre-Hitler period, which evoked revolutionary movements of singular violence, was a Germany in which unemployed workers on relief often received more in real wages than had been paid to their toiling fellows prior to 1914. Some appeasement of the malady might have been effected had there been anywhere an authority able to establish directives. But no such authority was recognized. People followed either those who sought to marshal the needy for revolution, or those who sought to continue the dominion of the relatively few. The basic fact was that underneath every modern society there was a huge and hopeless dungeon into which were plunged those who lost their grip on an increasingly precarious self-reliance. That dungeon was labeled insecurity.

Perhaps we may say that the Catholic problem during these turbulent decades has been to keep alive the concept of moral and religious authority. It was a task so like that confronted by Saint Augustine during the years of Rome's dissolution that the "City of God" is once more a contemporary book. Then, to be sure, opponents argued that Christianity, by throwing out the pagan gods, had brought on the crisis. Today it is contended that the Church, by reason of its failure to identify itself with either side in the basic modern conflict, is in part responsible for that conflict. There can be no doubt, it seems to me, that the Church's reply is still like Augustine's. The city of man is not the *civitas Dei*. Earth is a shadow. Light burns only in the citadel of the eternal years. Nevertheless we know that the Church has sat at the feet of Saint Thomas also. And so there is something to add to what Augustine said.

That something is the priceless, perilous endeavor to humanize the faith, or rather perhaps to carry the imitation of Christ beyond the limits set by the dichotomy of real and ideal. For whatever one may think, the hardest thing about the New Testament is its humanity. You and I may dimly comprehend the resolution of Gethsemane, by which the Divine Warrior pledged Himself to go down to bloody defeat. But who can understand the glory which He conferred upon the Body in electing It to enshrine His immortality in time? *Hoc est enim Corpus Meum*—not a symbol nor a promise, but an act of election to be here, in our turbulence, to become a Neighbor forever feasting, forever in communion! Who shall know what prodigal friendship is here offered? But who also shall not see that all we have and are, here and now, is dear beyond believing, that He is with the man and woman become one flesh, with the children, that He is behind the mask of every human frame, His image in spite of its defilement? We speak sometimes of Walt Whitman. But what is the gregarious mystical passion of that poet but the dimmest of all dim symbols of the Divine cry for comradeship—the cry of the Cross, these are my friends even though by them I die?

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One looks back and one sees the effort of the Church to meet this challenge in terms of justice, mercy and culture. But the Church is all of us who are of good will. It is the man who takes the Sacrament in dread of his unworthiness, it is the tattooed sailor confessing his spree of the night before, it is Professor Borgese in spite of himself, it is even you and I. The Church is tears and laughter, it is penitence and forgiving, it is silence as well as song. Sometimes it is a man on a lonely hill, stabbed in the hands, the feet and the side. And sometimes it is a woman who sits on the bed in which she has been taken in adultery, with a worm of guilt in her heart that will not be exorcised. Always it is all men to whom Christ still speaks. That is why, incidentally, one cannot sleep if one thinks of the hearths that are gone and at which we and our fathers have warmed our hands—the churches not of San Lorenzo merely, but of Coventry and Rotterdam, even the shrine of St. Hedwig in the Berlin some people ignorantly say was all profane. Ah, we shall mourn for those matchless chapels, and for the streets and the guild halls that are gone forever, once the battle is won. It is true that they may not be worth one life. But what may life be worth without them? We shall sometime remember that He wept (and it was the only time He wept) over the doomed beauty of Jerusalem.

These things are true because the Church is never hardness of heart. But there is hardness of heart because there is unredeemed humanity—

particularly where that humanity thinks too securely that it has been redeemed. Today the advocates of what they term "democracy" talk glibly of punishing every Fascist and every Nazi, as if these terms were simple. But perhaps your little Fascist was just a simple oaf of a chap, believing the big words he was told and proud in a uniform. Surely "democracy" is just another kind of totalitarianism if membership in it requires the kind of stamp put on a leg of lamb to insure its decent origin. And just so there is a cast of hardness which settles upon a section of the Church, bewildered by conflict and difficulty and routine. People look for all kinds of signs guaranteeing the genuineness of others, forgetting that the only badge of election is the inquiet heart (*cor nostrum inquietum*).

★

And so I come back to Italy, the beloved and the lovely, now like a Madonna with all the swords of sorrow in her heart. The crime of Fascism was not its abrogation of the parliament. It was not even its bravado. Fascism was monstrous because it divided men into leaders and the led, and because it now and then tempted Catholics also to credit the folly that they were among the predestined bailiffs. In so far as that temptation was indulged, there must be atonement. There has already been atonement, beyond the reach of American fancy. But what does a temptation prove other than that Italians are like ourselves? The point is simply whether our human dream of human brotherhood is only a mirage, or whether it is guaranteed by Divine desire. For while one may easily say that one has discovered a new communality, greater and more beautiful than that born of the Catholic faith, one must also proffer some guarantee that one is right. Will it really do to say, as Borgese does, that the guarantor is someone, as yet unknown, who will knit together the peoples of the earth? Or may it not be true, after all, that the promise was given Him whom we worship as the Christ?

Well there is the issue. It is for us whom nothing on earth or under the earth can sever from our faith in Him to speak out our assurance first of all. Tears hollow out our cheeks and there is blood on all our hands. Shame festers in the marrow of our bones. We have done to the world of men more outrage than any other generation. And yet, precisely for the reason that we are so laden with guilt we can speak. We particularly, here in America, not merely because we have so many Italians in our midst, but also because we have so greatly loved all the roads that lead to Rome. If we American Catholics desire to do so, we can fashion the Italy of the future. How? Not by demanding an overseer of our own, but by a great, a convincingly great, giving of friendship. Three

things we must agree upon. That there must be freedom for all, because man is free. That there must be justice for Italy, and no spoliation. That there shall be generosity and kindness, to the brim and running over. We must resolve upon these, and we must act.

We can have a Christian democracy in Italy if these things are done. And if there is a Christian democracy in Italy, there will be Christianity in Europe. Only then. Make no mistake about it. This is a desperate challenge not to our ingenuity merely but to our belief. Italy is destined to be the proof of whether we to whom the faith is given can yet redeem the world.

The Island

And there are still islands; you may visit them with children,

Some day when clouds keep away—see the boats at mooring
Caught in a web of light, the million lines, circles,
Your own head's shadow on the water rayed like a saint.
This is the day for the island; push the boat off, forget
the shore,

Watch the oarblade lengthen in a glass of calm—*look,*
children!—

Then lost in the little waves, mackerel-backed with silver.
Here is the island; land now, come ashore and explore
Where your legs are scratched with cranberries, blue-
berries, wild raspberries,

Or caressed by grass; where the seabirds nest and the
yarrow

Leans always seaward on its narrow ledge—*take care,*
children!—

Flowers on the edge with the smashed shell, the severed
claw.

Stand there, your back to the land and the sky above and
around you

And more islands with sea between and sky between and
life blowing

In with the wing, in with the tide, life all around.

Let it take you there, do not care, do not fear its embrace,
Do not stay to ask what it's for any more than the children,
Whom life has by the hand as they scramble over rock, over
slippery weed.

Look, they have found a gull's wing, a sheep's skull, a
rare pebble;

They will run to you with hands full—*Look!* cry the
children—

Of the treasure of the island, feather, stone and bone.

But you will bring the day home in the blood, you need no
Shell to tell you, no spiny urchin to remind you

That there are still islands, for you have seen them,
innocent and green,

You know they are there, not far from shore, though
altogether

Hidden in this dark weather—from everyone but the
children.

And you can go back with the children.

JOYCE HORNER.

Report on Christmas

A US ARMY SERGEANT

DEAR FRIENDS: Do you think your Christmas cards made my Christmas merry? Absolutely not. Or a couple of bright letters? No. Or Midnight Mass in a real chapel, with organ and singing in Latin, and the privilege of serving it myself? Temporarily, but not completely. Or even a turkey dinner from which, happily foregoing mince pie after ice cream and fruit cake, I rose snug but not tight?

I had a very happy Christmas eve. I helped prepare for the Midnight Mass by constructing the setting for the creche in what I believed was a crude but artistic manner. We had four figures for it—the Child, Mary, Joseph, and an angel bearing a “Gloria in excelsis” scroll (we considered changing the inscription to “Keep ‘Em Flying”).

Father Reiss, the new Catholic chaplain, Polish-born and still Polish-accented, has ideas about art. He wanted no background—just the figures and a light. I said, from limited stage experience, that it is hard to have just a light, unless you can put it on something. Also, I said, it is hard to float an angel unless you float him on something. Father Reiss wanted to tack the angel against the wall, but I didn’t believe this would look sufficiently aerial. Besides, I said, Christmas is not, like Easter, a feast of open skies. It is definitely a feast of little things and holes in the ground. Easter is the time when man is expanded into eternity; but at Christmas, God is compressed into humanity, and a tiny bit of humanity at that. God did not choose that the birth should come in broad daylight; He folded it into the close night, and then sent a little private sun to light it up.

When I had finally knocked together the four boards, out of a warm-toned reddish pine-wood with the rough side out, and hung up my angel on a stick in as aerial or frivolous a posture as possible, and grouped the Holy Family in the amber light on a bed of strawish excelsior. Father Reiss admitted that the effect was simple and beautiful—both of which adjectives are very relative and indefinite in the mouth of a kindly man.

★

Soldiers are too many and too noisy and too disorderly and too eternally present to be very enjoyable. They are as rough as the boards of their barracks, and as insistent as the bare electric lights, and as private as a thirty-man squad room, and as delicate as a mass-production washroom with all the plumbing in crowded sets of fours and sixes. Even now, blessedly alone as I am in the barrack (the night crew being gone to work), I feel their heavy tread on the walk outside, and their very presence in the uniform-hung walls and the cigarette butts on the floor and the slightly rumpled beds. One can get very sick of soldiers, and only the fact that we are all sick of each other makes us tolerant and forbearing and friendly.

But on Christmas night the soldiers were quiet in the chapel; and the chapel was lit only in the sanctuary; and

the seats were all filled without a bare spot or a bit of crowding; and the unanimity of seven hundred men could be felt like the harmony of a single breathing body. Corporal Hayne’s one-man choir sang beautifully, the other altar boy and I served without tripping over each other once.

I woke, after five hours, just in time to get to the 9 o’clock Mass by heroic effort. While trying to remember where the 9 o’clock Mass would be said, I fell asleep. I had not, you understand, gotten out of bed.

I woke again at 11, and again at 11:30, and rose for dinner. I ate, dropped over to the chapel, got back for supper, wrote in my diary (I didn’t feel up to writing letters), and decided to go to bed.

★

It was probably principally weariness that bothered me. But I know that I was also homesick and lonely and feeling very unchristian, not only because of the present, but because of the shadowy future ahead.

I want still to saw wood and draw pictures and fuss with lights, and pray sane prayers in the company of Christian men. I want my Army in the chapel, not in the field. Such is not the way of armies, nor always the way of God. But that is a hard thing to accept at Christmas time.

The men around me have some comforts, I thought. They can get drunk and ease the pressure. They aren’t bothered by the complete ideal of a home and children and grandchildren; from the epic of married life they take what careless couplets they can snatch (note: some of them got Christmas greetings from the local professional ladies they have patronized). They can take out their ill feeling in gossip and grumbling against the powers that be.

So I decided I would go to bed. I put my papers into my foot locker. There I glanced at the church calendar entry for tomorrow, Saint Stephen’s. My calendar is given to brief, goody-goody moralizations which often amuse me and oftener correct me. Of Saint Stephen’s it said: “The real spirit of Christmas is not one of color and festivity, but of heroic sacrifice.” I sat on the edge of my foot locker and meditated about this for a couple of minutes, reflecting that if one were truly joyful about Christmas, no incidental sacrifice could make the slightest dent in the joy. I concluded I was not truly joyful. I wanted Christmas—with all the trimmings. With a home and a family and a life stretching ahead to grow, as life was meant to grow, into eternity.

On the barrack wall was a cartoon from *Esquire*, and several times during the day it had bothered me. It was a girl in a red outfit consisting of a rakish hat and an improbably short and wind-blown dress. She was lithe and leggy and of course attractive.

I was sad; and on the barrack wall was a cartoon from *Esquire*. And in the lower right-hand corner of it was some verse. I glanced at the verse. This was it:

RED MEANS GO

I’d love to play the romantic goon

When Autumn features a harvest moon . . .

I’d love to squire you around the town

When the lights are up and the chips are down . . .
 To dance with you as the soft horns sigh
 And drink with you to the dreams that die . . .
 To hold you close for a last good-night
 While a taxi ticks in the dawn's gray light . . .
 And yet, delightful as this might be,
 It stays in the realm of fantasy . . .
 For I know too well when our trysts are through
 That the "One in Red" would be me, not you!

That the fools should not only steal this precious stuff of life and corrupt it, but that they should fail to worship even the obsession, and instead turn to cautious, cynical chatter about cost and worth! And I damned the artist and the versist and the editor and the printer.

And then I saw everything right. I saw what sorry fun the world endures that it cannot help counting the cost, how bitterly it has been cheated in the gods it has bought, and what an unhappy mess are all the frills and appurtenances and upholsterings that drive a sinner to bang the devil's counter and bellow, "I want my money back!"

I understood again what Christmas was for; to show us the light shining in the darkness, the light that the darkness has not yet comprehended; and the Virgin who could reach her full, ecstatic fruition, and be yet a fresh clean maiden of whose beauty we could never weary; and the holiness of little children who died before their time, not knowing how ugly a world can be.

Then all those possible tears inside me came out, inside out, and I laughed with my whole being, as I picked up my typewriter in the dayroom and came right back here, fresh and awake, to write this.

Communications

THE LEPERS

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editors: "My apostolate is easier here due to my leprous condition, isolated in the center of the isolated," writes Sister Mary Irma, from Ducos, New Caledonia. "I have the nodulous leprosy, but, as the good God wants me to work, He leaves my members intact, except one foot more or less painful since 1931, which renders walking a bit tiresome at times."

This letter coming from a Marist Sister who volunteered for work among the lepers in this remote island concludes with the statement which summarizes the attitude of all the religious who have ever come in contact with this dread disease. "I can say in all sincerity," writes Sister Irma, "that I possess a superabundance of joy in my humiliations!"

Today the men and women in our armed forces are viewing first hand the magic of faith and charity as exemplified by the missionaries who work among the lepers. We ask the Catholics of America to give a tangible proof of appreciation for this heroic undertaking by contributing to the Christmas Leper Fund as sponsored by the Society for the Propagation of the Faith.

Contributions sent to the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, 109 East 38 Street, New York 16, N. Y., or

your local Diocesan Director, assures you of an impartial distribution among the Catholic Leper Hospitals throughout the world.

Right Reverend Monsignor THOMAS J. McDONNELL,
National Director,
The Society for the Propagation of the Faith.

Mr. Diomedes de Pereya, who wrote a reply to Mr. Martin C. Kyne's article on the labor situation in Bolivia, a reply which we published together with Mr. Kyne's rejoinder to it in the issue of August 20, 1943, wishes us to make it clear to readers of THE COMMONWEAL that he does not accept Mr. Kyne's rejoinder. We ourselves have felt it necessary to terminate the controversy simply for reason of space.

In the issue of December 17, 1943, in "The Vatican and Fascism," by Don Luigi Sturzo, there occurred an unfortunate misprint. In giving the value of the Church properties taken over by the French State, the figure appears as "600,000 million francs," whereas it should be 600 million francs.—THE EDITORS.

The Stage & Screen

The World's Full of Girls

AN ADAPTATION of Thomas Bell's novel, "Till I Come Back to You," Nunnally Johnson's play emerges as a book laid lengthwise on the stage and arbitrarily divided into acts. Embracing the method as well as the subject matter of the James T. Farrell school of reportage, the script gives us an Irish-American-lower-middle-class family (Brooklyn this time), quarreling and conniving on any Sunday in 1942, with especial emphasis on the themes of racial prejudice, political and social ignorance, the American brand of fascism and sordid feminine intrigue. This together with still another "lullaby cheat," easily the twenty-sixth and most unsavory stage-baby so far. What little action there is slowly revolves about the reintroduction of a young erstwhile boarder in the establishment on the eve of his enlistment in the Marines, and very, very slowly culminates in his reunion with his erstwhile sweetheart, a friend of the house. As both case-history and character-study, the piece appeared to me to lack point; as a love story, it seemed shabby and inarticulate; and as entertainment, merely a long, long dreary evening. Perhaps the only interesting conjecture about the whole business is how anything originally called "Till I Come Back to You" could ever pop up under the diametrically opposed title of "The World's Full of Girls." And I only wish I had been able to read Mr. Bell's novel in time to give him the benefit of my many doubts.

In any case, however finagled as an author, he has received the benefit of some good acting. As the girl, I thought Virginia Gilmore's quality of gentle eagerness (reminiscent of Helen Hayes) extremely refreshing amid the murk, and Charles Lang's out-loud fascist, a subtle

job. Harry Bellaver also contributed a perfectly depressing scene as a Marine sergeant. Jed Harris's physical direction seemed at times strangely lame, particularly in the case of Julie Stevens ("a daughter-in-law"), who throughout three acts consistently stood twelve inches from various pieces of furniture in which she was never allowed to sit down. However, perhaps there was a reason for it. Perhaps there was a reason for the whole thing. (*At the Royale.*)

The Voice of the Turtle

BRILLIANTLY mounted by Stewart Chaney in a simultaneous layout of bedroom, living room and kitchenette, John van Druten's comedy is quite simply a smash, although I believe perhaps many people will prefer to regard the proceedings at the Morosco as no more their business than are the doings in the apartment next door. Dealing with the small scheme of a very young actress and a soldier falling more than in love over the interval of a spring weekend in town (an affair only slightly impeded by the machinations of an older actress, a "professional" friend to both), the play is delivered by an exact cast—Margaret Sullivan, Elliot Nugent and Audrey Christie respectively—and most nimbly directed by the author himself. The exigencies of spreading three actors over three acts are solved by a technical—even pyrotechnical—display of timing and business, plus a judicious use of telephone and radio which have already been noted by every inventor on the street. In the crucial part, one hanging by a thread to a sort of mole-hill of innocence, I thought Miss Sullivan occasionally obvious in her juvenility; and in the main, precisely as silly, irrational, unenlightened and endearing as was necessary. Mr. Nugent's interpretation was equally apposite. And Miss Christie's dexterity, particularly in her telephone aria in the first act, unquestionably deserves a piece all to itself. At once an up-to-the-minute muddle of manners with morals and an array of talents not usually to be found inside a single proscenium, Mr. van Druten's offering must go down as our only example of perfect *theater* in this year of war—a statement which means neither more or less than it says. Long, long ago, in a survey of people and novels and movies and plays, A. Woolcott made the statement that "for the sheeplike, all books are books of etiquette." For this particular record, I would like only to substitute the term "ethics" for "etiquette" and to underline that "The Voice of the Turtle" is not for the sheep, most certainly not for lambs. (*At the Morosco.*)

KAPPO PHELAN.

Of Thee I Sing

THERE'S a good sentimental orgy in store for those who like to drop a splashy tear. It's called "*Happy Land*," and it follows the lines of "Our Town" and "The Human Comedy"—sentimental Americana with emphasis on a certain locale. It celebrates a typical small town in Iowa, as those films sang of very American towns in New Hampshire and California. When Lew Marsh, the much loved and respected proprietor of the popular drug store, receives the telegram informing him of the death of his only son, he is bitter and inconsolable. To

Lew, outraged at the injustice of war's toll, including a boy who was just learning of the fullness of life, appears Gramp who has been dead these 21 years. As Gramp and Lew take a three-hour walk through Hartfield and the past, we are shown flashbacks revealing a series of important and unimportant events: Lew's return from the last war, his marriage to Agnes, the birth of Rusty, the death of Gramp, the boyhood of Rusty complete with spanking for naughtiness, first day of school, Boy Scouts, lessons in charity and friendliness, the awkward age, girls, graduation from high school, more girls, the unsettled future, war. Most of this is made appealing through the fine direction of Irving Pichel and the unassuming performances of Don Ameche as Lew, Frances Dee as his wife, Richard Crane as the grown-up Rusty, Harry Carey as Gramp, and Henry Morgan as Rusty's buddy who appears in the final scenes to assuage Lew's grief and loneliness and symbolize the continuity of life. If at times the film becomes maudlin, as in episodes showing pretty Larry Olsen portraying Rusty at five, or when the script (based on MacKinlay Kantor's novel) resorts to affectation, the whole is always brought back into line by Kenneth MacGowan's first-rate production. Hartfield, Iowa, is shown with such realism that it becomes the symbol of all midwest towns. Or, I should add, it represents the way we like to think of small towns in the midwest and all over the country. The presence of evil or even of meanness or greed or selfishness is peculiarly missing from such a glorification of the American Way. It is difficult to define this much discussed American Way; perhaps no one movie can do it. However, "The Human Comedy" was more successful in its attempt than "Happy Land." The very titles of the two films sum up their attitudes. Perhaps the latter film goes too far when it asks us to agree with Gramp who says to Lew at the end of their long walk that the death of Rusty, and all this country's Rusty's, is worthwhile "as long as American kids can be Boy Scouts and aim to do a good turn every day, as long as they can eat ice cream, go to high school, play football, have a picnic . . ."

As I have said before, shorts very often manage to express in their one or two reels ideas and impressions

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A distinguished motion picture event . . . bringing together again the beloved stars of "Mrs. Miniver" . . . in an exhilarating and memorable love story.

GREER GARSON - WALTER PIDGEON

in Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer's

"MADAME CURIE"

GREAT CHRISTMAS STAGE SHOW—The Music Hall's famed pageant of "The Nativity" . . . and a merry holiday spectacle . . . with the Rockettes, Corps de Ballet and Symphony Orchestra, under the direction of Erno Rapee.

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GIVE WAR BONDS FOR CHRISTMAS

that feature films huff and puff over for hours. The latest item in "This Is America" shorts is a quick version of "Our Town" today. "*Letter to a Hero*" is vividly real, though simple, visualization of what Tom, an American soldier at the front, reads in a missive from his former school teacher. We hear the teacher's voice as she writes the letter and conducts us around the town of Monroe on a beautiful Indian Summer day. And we see the elderly, patient teacher herself, the pupils at high school, football practice, Main Street. The teacher goes out to the farm with Tom's friend, Amy, and the postman who is delivering the silver star medal awarded to Tom for bravery. We see Tom's proud parents as they look at the medal in their living room on whose walls hang family portraits of the past hundred years. We see Tom's young brother, who has "grown a foot," the cows at milking time, the Red Cross workers in town, the Senior-Freshman dance, the parade with the American Legion and 4 H Club and Civilian Defense Groups. We see many of Tom's friends and relatives, and the teacher tells us what they are doing in the war. "*Letter to a Hero*" may not exactly show the state of the nation as it implies, but it is another interesting commentary on the American Way, even if it is an idealized way. And the film provided a first-rate model for a letter full of everyday trivia that any soldier would welcome reading.

Just to prove that films do not cover only sweetness and light in the American scene, it might be well to glance at three recent items concerned with juvenile delinquency. It isn't likely that the movies are to do much with this subject matter, because the Office of Censorship has put its foot down and said such films would not be considered suitable for export. The feature picture, "*Where Are Your Children?*" must be respected for its intentions, but cannot be considered seriously because its melodramatics get out of hand. Gale Storm plays a young girl who falls into bad company when she is mistreated at home. Fortunately she is befriended by an honorable youth (portrayed by Jackie Cooper with his usual intense sincerity). The girl is picked up by the police when her undesirable playmates kill a gas station attendant; however she is given a fresh start by a wise court when her brother and Jackie, now in the Navy, come to her defense. The cards are badly stacked in the plot, and the camera lingers too long on the seamy aspects of the girl's associates. But this film deserves attention for considering the problem and condemning delinquent parents.

The two shorts covering this same subject are more realistic. They omit plot and baldly state facts. While "*Children of Mars*," of "This Is America" series, looks at only one group of our wayward children, those whose parents are busy in war plants, and puts too much faith in the agencies dedicated to child welfare, "*Youth in Crisis*," made by the March of Time, searches all phases of the problem and is more intent in making audiences aware of its seriousness than in solutions—which are obviously too difficult for simplification in a film. The M.O.T. opens with a bombshell for parents to mull over: among the white registrants, one out of every four rejected selectees is rejected for mental or nervous conditions.

Psychiatrists are most worried today about delinquency among civilian youth. Then the film proceeds to look into what today's youngsters are doing. We see kids listening to too imaginative radio programs, frightened during air raid drills, participating in race riots, defiantly making faces at the camera as they get out of patrol wagons. With squalid trailer settlements, with homes economically secure but upset by wartime irregularity, with youngsters frequently making good money and trying to imitate adults without restraint, with adolescent girls thinking any man in uniform is a hero to whom nothing can be denied, and with startling figures that show increases in venereal diseases and juvenile delinquency, "*Youth in Crisis*" paints a grim picture of what war is doing to American youth. A couple of scenes are on the lurid side, and some, like those showing sailors picking up girls, kids smoking marijuana or buying pornography, are dangerous film material. After the short indicates the good that could and should be done by day nurseries, community child guidance groups, schools as social centers, Y.M.C.A.s, church clubs, dry night clubs and 4 H Clubs, it insists that "the well adjusted home built upon a foundation of affection and understanding is still the surest bulwark for safeguarding the nation's youth." With this conclusion we must agree; and while movies are not the best medium for study of this subject which has grown to be one of today's most serious problems, if cinema can assist by making Americans aware of these social ills, it should do so. The films mentioned here merit praise for their timely warnings.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

Editors' Choice

HERE IS YOUR WAR. Ernie Pyle. Holt. \$3.00.

FOOD "CRISIS." Roy F. Hendrickson. Doubleday. \$2.50.

Americans in Tunisia

MOST correspondents have made a career of keeping hot on the trail of the greatest excitements: revolutions, disasters, triumphal moments of the world's leading figures, wars. The most successful of them have never been far from the front page. Yet it may well be that the best-known correspondent of this war is a man who has spent his time observing the discomforts and real trials of the man in the ranks. Ernie Pyle's "*Here Is Your War*" tells authentically how literally hundreds of American soldiers felt about what they were going through in the North African campaign. It is written by a man who is supremely interested in people.

Most of the men have only the vaguest ideas how it happened that they were torn from their homes and found themselves on foreign battlefields in the first place. And they have no ideas at all about war aims or the problem of the postwar world. Like every soldier in every army the world over, their one object is to get home as fast as possible—and they have no other war aim. Yet despite all this they have developed into an army of ruggedness, courage and determination to win whatever objectives are set for them by their military superiors. As a whole they have stood up under fire superbly. The seamier side of war is absent from these pages, for Ernie Pyle seems to manifest a temperament akin to Dickens; his love of people

imparts any underlying feeling of optimism in all that he writes.

"Here Is Your War" will hardly do for cover-to-cover reading. It is too disconnected and cut up for that. Where names and full addresses are welcome in a daily newspaper column, they tend to get over-burdensome in chapter after chapter of a book. The thing to do is keep the volume on the library table and pick it up from time to time.

There is something undeniably engaging about a man who makes a career out of sharing to the full the hardships of the American soldier in battle. A man who by choice takes in his stride the danger, the dirt, the noise, the cold, the damp, the heat, the mud, the foxholes, the enemy's bombs and rifle fire, the sorrows of losing one's comrades. Ernie Pyle has experienced all this first hand, again and again. And now after a stay in this country he has returned to the wars. Once again readers of the Scripps Howard papers will know what our men in the line are experiencing, how they are taking it, what they have in mind. Americans owe Ernie Pyle a great deal for what he has done and is still doing to bring them closer to their loved ones overseas.

What We Eat

MR. ROY F. HENDRICKSON is Director of the US Food Distribution Administration. Of course he is careful to point out that his new book, "Food 'Crisis'," is merely an expression of his personal views and in no way affects the United States Government. Yet it seems doubtful whether any well informed officials would seriously dispute the main outlines of his discussion. His object is to supply briefly all the facts necessary for a citizen's understanding of the problem. He does his best to avoid entering into farm politics, but makes it very clear that he approves the idea of subsidies and does not side with those farm organizations which have been fighting them and trying to strangle the FSA. Careful examination does not provide a single instance of his directly criticizing any of the farm pressure groups—which means that his book is remarkably free of polemics and therefore all the more useful to those who would like the American public really to have some knowledge of what it is all about.

It is remarkable how much ground Mr. Hendrickson covers in 275 pages. First he points out what a surprise it was to us to discover that our supplies of food were not limitless. Then he goes into the whole question of feeding the armed forces—how it is done and how much they need if they are to operate at peak efficiency. He asks, "Will we be hungry in the war period?" And points out that there is no reason for real hunger, though there may be and certainly will be unsatisfied appetites for such delicacies as sirloin steaks. Then he goes on to discuss Lend-Lease food as well as the probable demands in occupied areas once we succeed in liberating them.

He has an excellent analysis of rationing, of prices and stabilization. He describes the American farm plant and points out how it can be used most efficiently for maximum production. He then devotes a chapter to the really magnificent achievement of Great Britain in remodeling its agriculture—an achievement far too little publicized in this country. He likewise describes how Britain manages food distribution and the extraordinary development of communal dining rooms. He follows this with what we ourselves have actually done, contrasting our present problems with those in the last war. He also analyzes care-

fully Germany's food situation. Mr. Hendrickson's concluding chapters point to steps which we still could take in more efficient production, in tapping outside sources and in more efficiently using what we have. Finally he discusses the problems which are likely to trouble us in the post-war world.

From this outline the reader can form a fairly good idea of how complete is the treatment given in this book to what must remain for some time one of the world's two or three major worries. For there is no doubt that a world half of which is ill-nourished, and perhaps a tenth luxuriously nourished, is an unstable world and will remain such no matter what brilliant political daydreams we may entertain and no matter what idealism may provoke in the way of attempts to solve the problem of war. Since this country is rapidly becoming overwhelmingly urban, it is especially important that city dwellers become far more familiar than they have been in the past with the technical aspect of the food they eat. Otherwise we shall merely be confronted with an intensification of the present thoroughly unhealthy set-up in which Congressmen representing urban areas abstain from voting on farm questions and allow the latter entirely to be managed in the interest of an increasingly tight group of profit-minded farmers, from whom it would be too much to expect a degree of unselfishness and broad social vision certainly not characteristic of any other class. The most elementary self-interest of our city population makes this essential.

Of course it would be futile to urge that the broad urban masses familiarize themselves with these matters; but one can expect that the more influential segments of the urban population should do so and should take a lead in bringing pressure to bear upon urban legislators when the latter, largely through ignorance, fail to understand that the interests of their constituents are deeply involved in farm legislation. **Until this has come to pass, our food problem will be mismanaged, for it will be handled in an unbalanced way, and the common sense sort of recommendations so ably presented in books like Mr. Hendrickson's will simply never be put into efficacious practice.** Of course this process of education will be slow, and it is a peculiarly difficult one because of our long established social habit of assuming that there will always be plenty to eat in the good old USA. Yet it is a process which must be initiated and furthered by everyone who has it in his power to do so.

More Books of the Week

Arrival and Departure. Arthur Koestler. Macmillan. \$2.00.

THERE is not an empty word in this book, not a single hollow reflexion, not one "literary dialogue" splitting the author's monologue in two as a traditional device. It is all life, fascinating, symbolic and great. Although its message is sad, its detail often unsavory and sordid and its outlook hopeless, I shall not retract what I have said: this is a very great book. For those who do not know Koestler it may be useful to say that he has the intensity and the searching profundity of Graham Greene, with whom he also shares the great art of placing the pieces before you while leaving you the joyful experience of creating the pattern for yourself. Sometimes he attains to the greatness of vision of Dante, especially in the story he calls "Last Judgment," at other times he equals Dostoevski's symbolic inventiveness. All through the book

you feel sure that the author masters the great questions of our time and knows what he is talking about. There is an assuredness and a security of stroke which reminds one of the brush of the greatest painters. Every single personage is a living character, none of them could be absent without warping this magnificent scenario for the drama of the soul.

Peter Slavek, obviously a Yugoslav communist, escapes to what is also obviously Lisbon after terrible tortures, first at the hands of his own dictatorial government and then at those of the nazi invader. He offers his services to his government in exile and almost starves while waiting for acceptance by its inert bureaucracy. When he finally is accepted hysterical paralysis strikes him. A psychoanalyst, herself a victim of psychic disorder, cures him according to the well known pattern: the result is that he decides to forget his adolescent heroic antics and to withdraw from the fight to breathe freely in America. A strange love story helps him to make this decision. But all this reasonableness comes to naught: with a terrible fatalism he returns to his adolescent heroism, which to him is no heroism any more, in the easy pattern of clear cut party and national lines. We find him at the end descending with a parachute over the mountains of nazi-held Europe "gently swaying and falling, as a leaf falls to the ground at night under the uncurious stars."

Under the impact of his mysterious psychoanalytical experience all his personal moral values have become nothing but reactions and functions, his faith is gone. The great causes and ideas which "pamper" the surface hero have vanished in his experience with the Communist Party, with the asinine attitude he finds in those who represent the bourgeois world and finally—it is a last body blow—in terrible discussion with a cynical young Nazi. He has no answer to give him. Not that there may not be an answer. He has been born between times, as he writes to his lover in his last letter from the airfield, whence he starts forth on his desperate mission: "I'll tell you my belief, Odette. I think a new god is about to be born . . . Don't try to divine his message or the form of his cult—this will be after our time. The mystics of our day are as trite as the political reformers. For we are the last descendants of Renaissance-Man, the end and not the beginning . . ." There was no one to tell him whether he had succeeded or failed, and no scale to measure the value of his deeds. All he could hope for was that his departure might help to bring forth "the birth of a new god" and this moment "was not one to speak of it."

Koestler sees in every night's dream a judgment by the unconscious, as unexorable as a Last Judgment. In a grandiose symbol of his, this Hope-Despair of the author which is perhaps that of our whole generation, a feeling of utter futility of life, inability of satisfying the quest of faith for intellect, takes shape. Before the tribunal of this "Supreme Judge," who condemns all mankind, "some are condemned who had been wrong for the right reason, others who had been right for the wrong reason." He sees himself as the crusader who has lost his cross. "We can't supply him with one, that would make things too easy." And he adds, with almost Jobian terror, that "there are times to float and times to sink."

Mr. Koestler, who was simply a leftist a few years ago and who surprised the world about a year ago with his articles in the New York Times magazine section, belongs to the new youth and is a forerunner prophetic in stature of the men who will come home from war. It will be

their questions we will have to answer, and they will not be satisfied with just better houses, more cars and the Beveridge Plan, nor will a return to "normalcy," freedom from government interference and world police content them. This book stirs up the most profound questions in man's mind. It seems to be one of those novels which with seismographic sensitivity show that the structure of the world is shaken deeper than by what air raids and U-boats can do. Our thought patterns of fascism and communism, reaction and progression wither away before the final profundity of his questions. This is the great provocation to religion and churches. The answer will not be given by devices, salesmanship or "explanation," but by something only God can give us in this great distress of souls. Peter Slavek belongs to the eternal adolescents who move the world, but he awoke to see himself and has lost his faith. Without a faith, except that he believes himself to be part of a meaningful process of history, he goes out to sacrifice his life in an heroic deed, like a falling leaf under uncurious stars.

It would be easy to say that this is an unchristian, naturalistic and dangerous book, that its message is despair, dangerous to war morale, that there is a complete absence of churches, priests and nuns (in the face of the fact that the author betrays an intimate knowledge of the Church and never says a slighting word against her), that his moral standards are unchristian and that the boldness of his images border on blasphemy. All that could and will be said by our "Beckmessers" and pharisees. But all that is beside the point. Nowhere have I read a more concise presentation of what makes a young Nazi tick than in Bernard's, the tempter's, creed on p. 132, nor a better symbolization of the bourgeois or communist mind than all along through the book in almost all counterparts of the hero. What scene could better summarize a great problem than does that immense confrontation in the Yugoslav prison between the stupid poor prisoner and his intellectual counterpart as Koestler has written it? I do not know of any better representation of the clash of the two generations than Peter's encounter with Raditch, his father's friend.

In the final analysis, despite appearances, this is a Catholic book: here stands a man before the gates, desperate and covered with wounds, representing the new generation and prophesying once more the mind of the combatants, our enemies and our sons, who will return, one day, from the front. Are we going to shut him out because he is a sinner, in rags, and dirty? Don't we even want to listen to him? Others will.

H. A. REINHOLD.

Rise to Follow. An Autobiography by Albert Spalding. Holt. \$3.50.

DURING a tour to the Coast, Mr. Spalding's pianist once found a young lady showing acute signs of discomfort while Mr. Spalding practiced in an adjoining compartment. "You don't like music?" asked Mr. Benoist. "That's just the trouble. I do like music. I'm on my way to hear Albert Spalding in Los Angeles," said the girl. "Did you enlighten her?" asked Spalding, on hearing of the encounter. "And lose a customer? Not me," returned Benoist.

Like his old friend Walter Damrosch, Mr. Spalding has a splendid enjoyment of music, art and life in general. From his mother, he not only gained inspiration for his career but the incomparable gift of sympathy and consideration for his fellow beings. The Spaldings shared

their home with all their family and friends either in New York or Florence where Great Aunt Sally gave Albert his first fiddle. Albert shares with Mozart the honor of being the only boy of fourteen to qualify for entrance into the Conservatory of Bologna. At sixteen, Albert made his debut in Paris. With his father the partner in the prosperous sporting-goods firm, Albert was spared the grim struggle which has faced many another genius. But Mr. Spalding Senior was determined to rear no dilettante and suggested that, until recitals in the European capitals ceased to be a liability, Albert confine his playing to the provinces. A measure which taught the younger Spalding a good deal more than how to earn his own living. He met Saint-Saens when he was 17, and Saint-Saens, who was 71, proposed they celebrate their reverse ages with a concert in Florence. "Work. Work hard and above all study counterpoint," was the old composer's parting advice, and work Albert did, although he says he felt like a tyro at it compared to an artist like Gabilowitsch, whom he discovered after an extra long rehearsal and concert, propped up in his berth in the train studying the score of "Tristan." London and Berlin had both acclaimed Spalding before his first concert in New York in 1908. Tours through Europe followed which provide amusing and vivid accounts of Imperial Russia, Holland and the Scandinavian kingdoms. "Sibelius is Finland itself," he was told in his favorite Helsingfors, "the historian of the world deep within us Finns, the prophet of our world to come."

During World War I, Lieutenant Spalding served under Captain Fiorello La Guardia, who was representative in Italy of the joint Army and Navy Aircraft Board. There was a terrible dearth of raw material—copper, steel, ashwood—which La Guardia decided must be remedied. How he and his Lieutenant set off on a smuggling expedition to Spain in civilian clothes with a letter of credit for five million dollars but with a bogus military order concocted by Spalding because the Captain refused to delay for the official authorization has enough raw material for an Oppenheim thriller.

E. V. R. WYATT.

My Life in China. Hallet Abend. Harcourt. \$3.00.

ABEND'S book is good, but not good enough. Such papers as the New York Times or the press organizations have a responsibility greater than that of the official guardians of American policy, the State Department and Navy. Whether acknowledged or not, they have that responsibility because they affect public opinion directly. Since Pearl Harbor (outstanding evidence of our Pacific policy's bankruptcy) correspondents are explaining what happened. They are frank. They are not white-washing themselves. They are saying why they did not understand vitally important phenomena, or, if they did, were not able to put them over to their chiefs. That is honest and good, but it has a serious fault: few are conscious of history, none consider what went before him—an individualism disregarding all but self. Abend refers to a too simple solution of the Japanese problem: "Defeat and disarm Japan. Give Manchuria and Formosa back to China . . . kick Japan out of Korea and set up a benevolent international tutelage . . . there to prepare for independence . . . apply the Atlantic Charter . . ." etc.

For eight years, from 1896 on, as adviser to the Emperor of Korea, that is exactly what I was doing: to urge upon the State Department, the British Foreign Office and the Quai d'Orsay prevention of clashes between the Manchu

Empire, Russia and Japan which seemed inevitable unless we all agreed to neutralize Korea. None was even interested. Today, we all admit our ignorance of Japan. Yet . . . our early treaties were made by our old "wooden ships and iron men" of the Navy. They did a far better job of diplomacy in the Pacific than their civilian diplomatic successors. We have had American naval officers who knew Japan, who did *not* look on the Japanese as savages, who were conscious of impending explosion in war, and saw no need for it unless we forced it of our own ineptitude. Today we make great mystery of "psychological warfare." If the word means anything, it means understanding of human persons concerned in war and peace, and that we have never even attempted to do officially. When John MacMurray was chosen to develop the Walter Hines Page Foundation, it was exactly that which he saw as his objective: "the psychology of nations in their international relations." The Foundation never got started. Today new men without roots in history offer analyses and solutions, some of them good as far as they go. We have set up "Foreign Service Schools." Has any of them, even such as are Catholic and therefore should possess a world outlook, ever based anything upon Asiatic or African psychology, or upon personal experience, knowledge, or understanding of what has caused this most dangerous part of the World War, and the immensity of the task before us in reconstruction? We need to do better than that.

WILLIAM FRANKLIN SANDS.

Mother America. Col. Carlos P. Romulo. Doubleday. \$2.50.

A FEW WEEKS ago I visited the home of an old shipmate on the West Coast. Examining his beautiful living room, I was attracted to a fine hardwood table, of exquisite design. His wife told me its story. The Doctor, a Senior Dental Officer, had done duty in more peaceful days at Manila. A Filipino workman, employed by a neighbor, contracted a very severe case of trench mouth. When the doctor heard about it, he invited the patient to his office after hours and treated the case till a cure was effected. Warned that no recompense could be accepted, the workman carved this table, and left it at the Doctor's home as a mark of his gratitude.

According to Colonel Romulo's book, "Mother America," this was no isolated incident. The author testifies that relations between Americans and Filipinos were unique in the turbulent history of imperialism. Certainly our entrance into the islands was deeply resented: three hundred thousand died in heroic resistance to our occupation. Exploiters followed the flag, and the white assumption of superiority irritated the natives. Nor could the Western mind grasp the Filipino's Oriental courtesy, his emphasis on the spiritual, his interpretation of temporal values. But the conqueror had a sense of justice and a concept of stewardship that healed the breach. The earliest American government established Rizal Day, in honor of the hero of the fight for independence; they invited both races equally to all official parties and opened the state balls with the Philippine ceremonial dance. "These are the imponderables that weigh so much more than material things in the Oriental scales." Nor were more tangible achievements lacking. The Filipino was amazed when Americans were punished in the courts by white judges for offenses against the natives; they were sceptical when told they would be trained for responsible positions, but saw the promise fulfilled; they struggled for independence

and had their dream realized. Throughout the years of occupation they came to value the sincerity of American pledges and value the democratic recognition of their human rights. They demonstrated their appreciation on Bataan and Corregidor.

Colonel Romulo has not written this volume merely to laud this American experiment in colonial democracy. For him, the Philippine pattern has wider application. "The Peace Conference that will be held at the end of the war will be the real battleground of imperialism versus the principle for which the democracies are supposed to be fighting." The next war, if not prevented, will be a racial conflict centering in the Pacific. The Filipino, as the only Christian in the Far East, can interpret the Orient for the West; while the American, who profited economically and politically by his generosity, might be able to convince the other imperial nations of the folly of colonial repression. If they will not be convinced, they must face a future of bitterness and bloodshed, for the peoples of the East, who chose the feared emblem of the Rising Sun in preference to white domination, will never rest content with any solution except freedom and equality. Such is the verdict of the author, and the facts are on his side. Nor is there any justification for delay: "Imperialistic nations always say of the subject people they refuse to set free: 'They are not yet prepared.' America prepared the Philippines in 42 years. How many centuries, may I ask, have other white nations occupied other sections of the Orient?"

JOSEPH N. MOODY.

The Sacraments of Daily Life. Bernard J Kelly. G.S.Sp. Sheed. \$3.75.

THE READER who has been accustomed without complete satisfaction to the usual fare of "spiritual books" will experience the thrill of new and more satisfying discoveries in this book. He will find, perhaps for the first time, that the Church does offer to the Christian a diet of wholesome, substantial food, and that this is contained in Catholic dogma, in Scripture and liturgy. However, a reader who is familiar with the dogmatic, Scriptural and liturgical basis of Christian living will be disappointed that the author has gone so far and no further in freeing himself from the individualistic, sentimental and consequently minimal viewpoint of the Christian life in general and the sacraments in particular.

The first five chapters of the book are more or less introductory, dealing with union with God and the sacraments in general. There follows then a chapter devoted to each of the sacraments, a sentimental one on Our Lady as "Queen of the Sacraments" and one on their relation to the Mystical Body. There is a good deal of solid food in the book, solid food whenever it is solid doctrine that the author is concerned with. But there is still so much of that semi-conscious attitude that genuine doctrine is not capable of being lived, or that it needs to be watered down with sentiment before it can be assimilated.

Instead of studying the sacramental symbols themselves, in conjunction with Scripture when that is possible, to point out just what each was designed to do, and then make his application to everyday living, the writer works from the psychological principles of "ascetic theology" and then forces doctrine as an after-thought, to support his own pattern for Christian living. The result is that very much of the richness of sacramental theology is missing, and that means richness that should be available for "daily life."

When the sacraments are not seen as means of putting us into personal touch with the redemption and of enabling us to grow step by step in it, there is bound to be a warped perspective. This is true both of the individual sacraments and of the whole sacramental system. Hence there is missing from this book a true understanding of an economy in which each sacrament has a proper and definite place.

Had he adhered more closely to Saint Thomas, the author would never have said, "The Blessed Eucharist is the end of Baptism" and of Confirmation. Neither would he have exaggerated the "personal" realism of the Eucharist at the expense of sanctifying grace. There he is in opposition to at least the common teaching of the better theologians. In fact his chapter on the Blessed Eucharist is the weakest, most confused part of the book. He begins with a complete separation of sacrifice and sacrament, and consequently ends with everything dangling in mid-air. "The Sacraments of Daily Life" is a wonderful opportunity that slipped through the author's fingers.

JAMES H. DEADY.

The Russian Enigma. William Henry Chamberlin. Scribner. \$2.75.

WILLIAM HENRY CHAMBERLIN'S former contributions to the study of Soviet Russia are considerable. His book "The Iron Age," written at the time when this new Russia was in the making and still in the throes of a laborious and often tragic process, is on the bookshelf of most students of the Bolshevik Revolution.

Today in "The Russian Enigma" Mr. Chamberlin sums up his former observations and adds to them an interesting survey of Russia at war. We shall disagree however with the title chosen by the author. The latter himself stresses in the beginning of his book that the reason why Russia has been considered so long a riddle is partly the fact that "Russian history has never been adequately known abroad." Unfortunately, neither the great historian Klyuchevsky, nor other Russian scholars are sufficiently known to the Western reader. "And," the author goes on to say, "because Russian history has not been very attractively presented or very widely studied," the public at large has still a "muddled scrapheap conception" of Russia's development. To this must be added an even more confused knowledge of present day Russia. The Soviet Union has actually come to light through this war. We should cease to consider it as an "enigma" and seek to regard it as something very real and tangible, as a factor in the balance of forces which are not only gradually crushing Hitler's power, and hastening his defeat, but which will contribute to the building up of the post-war world, as the author points out.

It is Mr. Chamberlin's aim to give us a clear historic picture of Russia past and present, and not to treat that country as an enigmatic land, as a subject of vague speculations. The reader will find in the book interesting and precise data concerning the various phases of the Russian Revolution, from Leninism to Stalinism, from the five-year plans to the present war. Speaking of these periods, the author justly remarks that "the Russian temperament, quite irrespective of what political and social system may prevail, is an extremist temperament, unwilling to do anything by halves."

Even in the seventeenth century the Croatian scholar, Yury Krijanitch, who visited ancient Moskovia, wrote that Russians are "unable to observe the middle way." They "go to extremes and wander on the brinks of preci-

pices." These lines express the peculiar maximalism which characterizes Russian historical trends beginning with the drastic reforms of Peter the Great and ending with the Revolution.

Throughout the various phases of Russia's history, we discover, however, that this extremism was constantly counter-balanced by a deep national instinct of self-preservation. The Russian State was gradually built up, spiritual life developed, culture promoted, and Western technical methods applied. Russia, threatened frequently on her borders, repulsed the foreign invaders with an unflinching spirit.

In the closing chapters of his book, devoted to Russia's supreme struggle, Mr. Chamberlin describes the constructive process which has once more been resumed: the return to national tradition, the resolute stand against the foreign invader, the resurgence of patriotism, all the factors which are inspiring Russian resistance today, and are determining her stabilization.

HELEN ISWOLSKY.

The Story of Helen Gould. Alice Northrop Snow. Revell. \$3.75.

THE FIFTH of September, 1829, is a date to be remembered. On that day, to the everlasting hurt of American history, canny Charles Francis Adams, John Quincy Adams's son, married Abigail Brown Brooks, the daughter of the millionaire Boston merchant Peter Chardon Brooks. Their children, Henry Adams, Charles Francis Adams II, and Brooks Adams, all three of whom were historians after a fashion, scorned any and all millionaires, preferring to forget that their maternal grandfather was a Croesus. Henry, who passed himself off as a critic of the capitalistic system, spent his last years whining that the Jews were overrunning the world. Charles Francis Adams II, who made a stab at business, never forgave Jay Gould for having the wit to drive him out of the Union Pacific. Brooks, perhaps the most intellectual of the three, was the author of "The Law of Civilization and Decay," a satanic hymn to the blessings of war.

Thanks to the influence of the Adams triumvirate, and of their followers, the study of American business has been despised as beneath the notice of scholars, and capitalists have been looked upon as inherently evil figures. Even today there is no respectable biography of Jay Gould. The Adamses happened to vilify him in a couple of self-righteous pamphlets.

Some day, when the life of Jay Gould is written, when the revolution he effected in finance capitalism is at last scrutinized, his biographer will be obliged to write dozens of paragraphs to thank Alice Northrop Snow. Mrs. Snow, the niece of the great business man, has given us in "The Story of Helen Gould, Daughter of Jay Gould, Great American," an invulnerable compilation of family anecdotes.

Students of Gould's technique will of course continue to utilize the government's investigations of his activities. But historians who wish to picture Gould aboard his yacht, the *Atalanta*, or at Irvington-on-the-Hudson, in his exquisite Gothic home, will be required to read and re-read Mrs. Snow.

WAYNE ANDREWS.

My Revolutionary Years. Madame Wei Tao-Ming. Scribners. \$2.75.

THERE is that saying about "Damned clever, these Chinese." But as Madame Wei Tao-Ming, wife of the ambassador, is much too diplomatic to remind us in her

"The key to the Russian enigma" is what Catherine de Hueck calls Helen Iswolsky's *Soul of Russia*.

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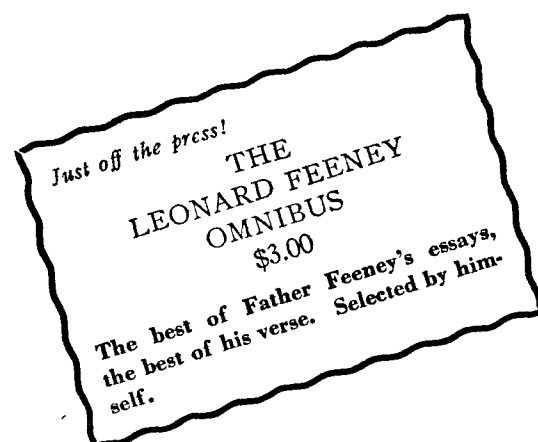
The Soul of Russia

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autobiography, "My Revolutionary Years," our respect for their intelligence has not stopped us from keeping the Chinese out of our country or from treating those already here as a distinctly inferior race. This is a very strange thing.

It becomes an even stranger thing as one reads "My Revolutionary Years," for Madame Wei is an unusually intelligent and capable woman. Born of a rich and conservative Mandarin family, she was a rebel even before the day she put on a non-stop screaming exhibition that successfully discouraged her elders from binding her feet in the ancient and rather cruel Chinese custom. She was a member of the Kuomintang at sixteen and at a tender age made many a train trip from Tientsin to Peking lugging bombs and dynamite in her innocent-looking suitcases, all as part of the violent designs of Sun Yat Sen Republicans on certain key figures in the Manchu régime.

Madame Wei won her Doctorate of Laws at the Sorbonne, which is not in the habit of giving such things away for nothing, and became the first woman lawyer, first woman judge and first woman president of a law school in all of China. Quite a remarkable lady.

Diplomatic to her finger tips, Madame Wei has not imitated her sensational predecessor in Washington, Madame Wellington Koo. She is not only extremely uncritical of China's allies; she has eyes for nothing in China itself but the determined, unified resistance to the Japanese and the progressive, forward-looking elements in the Chiang Kai-shek government. She mentions the Chinese Communists not at all—not once. Nor does she speak of the terrific inflation problem and the contrast of extreme poverty and extreme wealth, even in Chungking.

In "My Revolutionary Years" the distinguished wife of the distinguished ambassador from China has put her best foot forward and the best foot of her country. They are both more than good enough, and let us hope—and pray—that both will soon be equally unbound. JOHN C. CORT.

The Wake of the Prairie Schooner. Irene D. Paden. Macmillan. \$3.00.

THIS BOOK will be eagerly welcomed by anyone who has got lost trying to trace the paths of the westward expansion of the United States on old or modern maps, and come to the despairing conclusion that the only solution is to follow out the trails for oneself with the original records in hand. For that is exactly what Mrs. Paden and her husband spent nine years doing, and her book is the result of five years of compilation of field data and additional research work. The result is a labor of love and a boon to the immobilized student of Western history.

Dr. William G. Paden was concerned solely with the geography of the Oregon-California Trail; Mrs. Paden was enlisted as his research assistant and photographer, and soon found her interest in the trails growing from a vacation hobby to a full-time occupation. She has pieced together her notes and arranged them in consecutive sequence, so that the reader is carried along the trail from Independence, Missouri, to Oregon City and Sacramento. Excellent maps clarify each section of the route, and frequent references and quotations from the original diaries and journals kept by the pioneers (many of which the Padens unearthed) add considerably to the value of the book. There is a very full bibliography, which lists manuscript sources as well as printed matter.

Unfortunately Mrs. Paden has more competence as a researcher than as a writer. The book wavers between

a painfully folksy "Our Trip Through the Historic West" manner and an unsuccessful attempt to draw from the rich resources of the original records a connected narrative of the trail. Torn between the specialist's desire to incorporate every detail of his researches and the writer's hope of interesting a non-specialist audience, Mrs. Paden has failed to produce the book which should have crowned the family's long labors. The reader is lost in a sea of irrelevant details, irritated by repetitiousness, and left stranded by long arid sections of inept writing. Reading the book from cover to cover is almost as exhausting as the journey itself must have been, and leaves one without any clear picture of the main outlines of the western movement and with only a jumble of facts as reward. It is no part of the critic's function to discuss what sort of book the author should have written, but Western scholarship would have been the richer if the Padens' knowledge had been used to annotate and clarify a compilation of the original narratives rather than to document a rather flat narrative of personal adventure. For the average reader of this book will be more concerned with the trail blazers than with trail followers. MASON WADE.

An Irish Journey. Sean O'Faolain. Longmans. \$3.50.

THIS is a splendid book, in which a thoughtful, sensitive Irishman takes us through towns and cities all around the seacoast of Ireland, and tries to show us the precise quality and tone and spirit of each. Graciously Sean O'Faolain spares us description; and rightly scorns the tourist who sees the sights but in the end only verifies the picture-postcards. O'Faolain takes us to the people, reflects upon their history, their problems and their worries, brings up their current gossip; and in their talk succeeds—and succeeds, I say, remarkably well—in capturing the voice of their community; in revealing thus what unsuspected differences distinguish life in one Irish town from life in any other.

The talk is simply grand. In Cork it's acid; bitter and cruelly derisive. In Derry it's brief and humorless, even among the Catholics. In Galway it's large and rowdyish, rollicking and scandalous. And so it goes. O'Faolain is frank about his native city of Cork; he calls it "a town with a sting," and yet conveys to us subtly the surprising beauty of its slums—for O'Faolain has in him a great deal of the poet's awareness of all these things.

His book, brought out in England two or three years ago, appears now for the first time in an American edition. The text is illustrated by ten of Paul Henry's lovely paintings. DAVID MARSHALL.

The Music Lovers' Almanac. Edited by William Hendle-son and Paul Zucker. Doubleday. \$3.95.

THIS almanac will absorb the amateur music lover and prove a constant source of fact-straightening for the professional. Most happily, each day and page features a longer article of a few hundred words on an individual composer or other musical subject. There are also the expected notations of births, deaths, first performances, etc. The straight musical history and "explanatory" comment are always first rate. The "critical" comment, almost always admissible, is not entirely consistent or pleasing to the music lover who knows what he likes. Apparently the two editors disagreed on some questions, which probably makes it a better book. Most pages are illustrated, including pictures of your favorite composers. There are five pages of glossary and a highly serviceable index.

The Inner Forum

Christmas in California

THE TRADITIONAL Christmas light observances in the State of California go back to the year 1769, when a friar at the first "Mission," San Diego de Alcalá, lighted a candle on a primitive altar in preparation for Midnight Mass. His congregation were Indians. As the tradition grew the people built up a religious pageant which portrays the arduous journey of Mary and Joseph from Nazareth to Bethlehem. There was a final tableau in each home with a lighted, flower-filled altar upon which a miniature Nativity scene was faithfully reproduced.

After the pageant had unfolded on Christmas Eve the solemn Misa de Gallo (Midnight Mass) was offered up in the local church. This was followed in the church by a Nativity play, "Los Pastores" (The Shepherds). On subsequent nights until the Feast of the Epiphany this play was performed at the various homes to which the actors were invited. For the most part it was the candle-lighted patio of each home where the shepherds' play was enacted, and according to *The Tidings* of Los Angeles, "thus began the custom of outdoor Christmas lighting in California." As in a number of European countries, it was on the Feast of the Epiphany, or "Little Christmas," that the children received their gifts and toys, which were supposed to have been left by the Magi. And this whole Christmas interval was one of unending social festivity.

"From this early observance has sprung a tradition, rich and colorful, a tradition of warm hospitality, generosity and deep religious fervor . . . Begun by the Mission Fathers the tradition was carried on by the rancheros, who made the Christmas season a truly 'felices Pascuas de Navidad' without ever losing sight of its deep religious significance." This is the first time since Pearl Harbor that the people of California are able to celebrate Christmas with the extensive outdoor lighting for which their observances have become famous. It is interesting that as with the creche, or diminutive manger, this custom of the lights for Christ's Nativity is of Franciscan origin.

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